WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

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NOTICE AND APPEAL.

We send out many sample copies of this first number of a new volume, and specially to two classes.

1. To leading Presbyterians, Ministers and others. We seek to arouse them to the importance of honest dealing by our church with the great questions of human destiny. The church binds the conscience, and fetters liberty of investigation, by statements so severe that her ministers recoil from preaching them, and the large majority of both ministers and members do not fairly believe them. A church that is not honest before God and man vacates its right to speak for Him. This is the only publication that is urging upon our church the duty of revising these statements. We ask all honest men within the church to support us in this effort. They are not bound to accept our explanations of these mysteries, although we believe God has given us much light upon them. But they ought to help to keep the church and its ministry honest and upright and free. To subscribe for this journal, or to contribute towards its free circulation, gives aid to a work for which the need is vital, and which must needs be prosecuted amid much discouragement. We invite also from our brethren criticisms and suggestions in the line of this movement.

2. To those who are interested in the unity of the

church, as necessary to the accomplishment of her divine mission. Our interest in the Presbyterian Church is subordinate to our desire for the perfection of the whole body. Other journals are interested in church union. But none have sought out so deeply the underlying cause of these divisions, nor proposed so radical a remedy. The Church stands to-day shorn of power in the face of portentous evils that threaten the foundations of society. Even the great enterprise of modern missions lags, and the results accomplished are most meagre, compared with those to which she would be entitled were she properly equipped. A fragmentary Church cannot receive nor convey life from God to men in its fullness. We know of no other journal that is seeking to tell the Church the whole truth about this matter. We therefore ask for the support of all those who believe in the one Church of the one Lord, and who desire to see her become a fit temple for His abode, and the vehicle of His life and glory.

WORDS OF CHEER.

From a Presbyterian Pastor: "Whatever foot-hold WORDS OF RECONCILIATION gains in Presbyterian circles I rejoice in most heartily. The December number I have read with much pleasure. Have hardly been able to believe that you would make the headway you have, but am re-assured.

The way you suggest of meeting that resolution of Dr. Pierson's in the last Pennsylvania Synod is the very one that I determined at the time I would have adopted

if I had been a member of that body. Instead of adhering to the Standards by a general pronunciamento let them do it *ipsissima verba*, and that will best show whether they mean what their resolutions say.

I enclose five dollars—let the surplus from my subscription go to the circulation of the magazine."

From a Lady of hign social position: "It has given me much pleasure to commend your magazine to my friends, some of whom have become subscribers. Its teachings have been a source of interest and profit to me, and I am most thankful for the light you have been able to give us upon that dark and terrific point in our church's creed. I think there must be 'joy in the presence of the angels of God'—that His glory in the redemption of our race is being manifested to His church."

AN OUTLOOK UPON THE CHURCH.

The beginning of a new year is a time for outlook. Instead of glancing at the condition of the world, as we have been wont to do, let us look upon the Church. We find her at this time grappling with two great questions which relate to her life and progress. The first relates to her mission to the world. The second, to that unity of faith and life which is the the condition of her success.

1. For centuries past the Church has understood that her mission to mankind was to save them from going down to an eternal hell. During this century she has had a clearer apprehension than before that sin

breeds hell. She has, therefore, been slowly accepting it as her primary mission, to save men from sin. If this be the purpose of God in her calling, in this world, she is naturally raising the question whether it may not reach over into the world to come, and whether the grace of God in redemption is necessarily restricted to the opportunities of this present life, especially in the case of those countless myriads who have died in their sins without any knowledge of Christ. A Church that builds hospitals and asylums, that seeks to carry Christ's consolation to the wretched sons of want, and to the battered and wounded outcasts in this world-struggle against sin, and that grows up into the life of Christ by so doing, will not long remain content with a doctrine that makes death the limit of all the resources in God's eternal purposes of grace toward lost men, and which gives it power to stop the church from any further exercise of her royal priesthood in their behalf The honor of the God she worships, and of the Christ who has redeemed her by His blood, and who gave Himself a ransom for the forfeited lives of all men, is involved in this question. The current theories about a future probation are not signs of growing unbelief, but of this outcry from Christian hearts for a better knowledge of God,—one that shall bring into harmony all that His Spirit has taught her of His character and ways. In all the Reformed churches of Europe and America this question is coming to the front. And it cannot be cried down, nor hushed down, by a timid expediency. Twenty years ago the publication for two years by a Presby-

terian minister of a magazine like this would not have been possible.

One of our chief aims has been to throw the light of Scripture upon this great mystery. We have sought to show where the current theories of a future probation are wrong, in that they minify the present peril which overhangs sinful men. And we have directed attention to the basal and vital doctrine of Christianity, the resurrection of the dead, as containing within itself the true solution. Only the gift of a new life can bring with it the dawn of a new hope.

We have shown that the Church's great mistake has been in denying the essential character of resurrection, as a recovery out of that death-state which is the wages of sin, and in making that which is the effect of Christ's redeeming work, the prelude to a double retribution, and confirmation in endless agony and despair. Slowly, and yet surely, is the light of that "hope toward God," which He kindled when He raised Jesus from the dead, breaking over the darkness of the Church upon this subject. And the temporary check to the missionary spirit, due to the spread of a theory of prolonged probation before resurrection, will be followed by a new ardor for the work, when the Church comes to see that her present mission is to gather out of all nations a people prepared for the Lord, who, as the chosen seed under Him, shall carry out in an age to come the purpose of judgment and salvation toward the whole human race, dead and living, in obedience to which God raised Him up to be the Judge and Lord of both the living and the dead.

2. The other great question before the church relates to the hindrances to her mission arising out of her divided state. One of the most impressive signs of the times is the stirring up of Christians of every name to a sense of the shame and weakness of these divisions. The effort to remove them, to human eyes, seems hopeless.

How stands the case? There is hardly an article of the Christian faith upon which all who profess and call themselves Christians are agreed. Beginning with the Being and Nature of God, the orthodox affirm that He exists in three persons. The Unitarian affirms that this conception ends in tritheism, and that it is fundamental in the right knowledge of God that we shall conceive of Him as One Person, the Infinite Father, from whom all other beings are derived. The Swedenborgian affirms the same doctrine of the divine unity, but holds fast to the deity of Christ, whom it declares was the one personal God, manifested in the flesh. And yet few of these professing Christians would refuse to unite in the Scripture confession, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God." Upon the doctrine of the Atonement there is the same disagreement. The great majority of Christians hold, in some form, to substitution. They believe that the death of Christ was a veritable ransom, but whether for an elect company, or for all mankind, they are not agreed. Others hold that His sacrifice was a most impressive exhibition of the mind of God toward sinners, and an example to men of the great fact that, in the way of self-surrender for the good of others, men enter into

life. Some Christians conceive of Christ's sacrifice as if it were a device by which sinful men may escape future punishment. Others see that the forgiveness based upon it requires the separation of the sinner from his evil deeds and evil nature, and that the gospel of the remission of sins carries with it a divine operation for the putting away of sin in the way of either a self-judgment, or a divine judgment, against it. Christians are also widely separated by their views upon sacraments. One class makes them the ordained means, in the hands of a human priesthood, of conveying the life of Christ to men. Another views them as only the signs and seals of blessings already conferred. Some make immersion in water indispensable to valid baptism. Others insist that the quantity of water cannot be essential. While a few put such stress upon baptism by the Spirit as being alone of value, as to decline the water-rite altogether. Christians again are not agreed upon the question of man's immortality,—as to whether it is inherent in the fact that he is made in God's image, or imparted through Christ, through whom He gives eternal life. This divides them again upon the question of the endless existence in suffering of the lost, the one class affirming that no life, alienated from the life of God, can last forever. And we have already noticed how much they differ upon the meaning and place of resurrection in the divine scheme, upon the great question of human destiny, and the goal toward which God's redemptive working along the ages tends. They differ also in their views concerning the constitution of the

Church, the form of its organization, the functions of its ministry, and its relation to the world. The prelatist believes in a divine deposit of grace handed down through a regular succession of priestly men. The independent, in this grace as given to all men who come unto God in the way of faith, and that such believers constitute the church, with power to organize themselves in such forms as best subserve their own edification in the Lord.

To the external observer, then, an outlook upon the Church reveals a scene of confusion, and the prospect of union between these differing sects and factions hopeless. And yet, as we have seen, no more significant fact in the condition of the Church is apparent at this time than the growing desire for unity. She is forced to admit, notwithstanding the plea of denominationalists that more is accomplished through division, that she is falling far behind her Lord's standard of oneness in Him, and His condition of success by which alone the world can be made to believe. Hence, congresses, and discussions, and friendly overtures. How marked an advance, for instance, has been made by the Episcopal Church in this direction! One body of Congregationalists has replied to their overtures in a most fraternal way. And the people are ahead of the leaders in this movement. There is a yearning desire among the scattered members of the one flock of God, produced in them by the one Spirit, that it may be accomplished. Not that organic unity would of itself suffice. Something deeper is needed and longed for. And we believe that the Spirit who

begets the desire will ultimately show the way to its accomplishment. It will be through a revival in the Church of a sense of His presence in her—the revelation in her and through her of His omnipotent life. Not even the Bible can take the place in the Church of His personal indwelling Presence. In the first century she had no such full Bible as we have. And yet the indwelling Christ kept her strong and pure. We believe the Church in these last days needs to know that, in giving her the Bible, her divine Head never meant that she should put even His own book in place of Him,—so that she would be always appealing to its letter for guidance, rather than to the Spirit who indited it, and gives it life. We do not wish to be misunderstood. We hold most strongly the full inspiration of the Bible as the Word of God, and as our infallible guide. We believe also that the Spirit who gave it can never contradict Himself, and that all new views of truth must be tested by it. But we also believe that the Spirit who first gave the Bible to the Church, and through the Church, is God's perpetual gift to her to the end of time, that His presence must be duly acknowledged and honored, that His guidance must be not only sought, but expected, that His voice must be listened to, His promptings obeyed. We know the danger here of fanaticism. But even fanaticism is less dangerous than dead formality. Better the disorder of a Corinthian assembly, where there is the energy of the Spirit, than the most decorous worship of modern days of which He is not the inspiration. Now it is through this

fresh recognition of the infinite value and the permanence of His divine Presence in the Church, that she will find her way back into unity. He is able to guide her into all truth. He can adjust these parts of doctrine, held in different branches of the Church, and given to them to develop, into one perfect system. He can show where each is partial, what it can contribute, and how it must needs be supplemented. He can bring order out of all this confusion, and light out of this darkness. What the Church needs is not more discussion, nor even a more zealous study of texts, but light and wisdom from God, the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life. And it is because we believe in His Presence, although He is now grieved and quenched, that we believe the scattered members of Christ's distracted Church will yet come together into a true unity of life and faith in Him. This must be so, or the prayer of Jesus for His Church, and for the world, which was to be brought to faith through her, must remain unanswered. Let us each ask, at the beginning of this new year, what of prayer and effort each one of us is responsible to contribute to this end.

THE TIME OF RESURRECTION.

Upon this point a variety of opinions prevail among Christians.

1. The traditional opinion is that the countless multitudes who have lived upon the earth are all to be raised together, good and bad, at the last day.

2. The extreme opposite doctrine is that of Sweden-

borg, which has also its adherents in various evangelical churches. It is that, upon the death of the material body, man emerges into a spiritual world in a spiritual body. Death and resurrection are two parts of but one process.

3. Many advocates of conditional immortality hold that all men, even the saints, remain unconscious in death until the resurrection, which they believe will occur at a great crisis of the future—the coming of the Lord. They believe, however, in the first resurrection of the saints, and that, after a long interval, the wicked will be raised and punished by being consigned to extinction in the lake of fire, which is the second death.

4. Others, who reject the idea of the unconscious sleep of the soul—especially in the case of the saved—before resurrection, still hold to the idea that it is eclectic and progressive. "Every man in his own order."

As between the old traditional opinion that resurrection is simultaneous, and this view that it is progressive, there can be no doubt that the latter is taught in Scripture. The passage which seems most to favor the view that all classes are raised together is St John v. 28, 29. But the "hour" of vs. 25 is so manifestly a period of long continuance that we are not only justified, but obliged to regard the hour of universal resurrection (vs. 29) as a prolonged administration of the Son of Man, during which He shall recover all the captives in the realms of death. And various other passages teach plainly that there is "a first resurrection" (Rev. xx. 5, 6); that there is a chosen company first gathered from the harvest fields of death (Phil. iii. 11), "out from among the dead." "They that are Christ's at his coming."

The first view, which we have classed as Swedenborgian, makes the Scripture promise of *anastasis*, or resurrection, to be simply the promise of a future life. And that man enters upon this life immediately upon death is affirmed from such Scriptures as our Lord's conversation with the Sadducees (Luke xx. 26–38), in which He establishes the fact of resurrection by declaring that God's words to Moses about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob imply that these patriarchs were still living, and, therefore, raised out of death. The appearance of Moses and Elijah, with Jesus, on the Mount is also appealed to. Also His words to the dying thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Paul's words in 2 Cor. v, also seem to imply that immediately upon his putting off of this earthly tabernacle, he would find a "heavenly house" awaiting him in which he would be at home with the Lord. Other of his writings, however, assume that during the interval preceding the Lord's manifestation from heaven the saints would be asleep (1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thess. iv. 13–15), out of which they would be aroused by the trumpet-sound of some signal triumph over the empire of death.

The truth, we believe, lies between these two views. The Swedenborgian view is defective,

1. In the fact that it does not give proper weight to the fact of death as the wages of sin, and of that death-state which lies beyond the grave,—the sheol and hell of Scripture. It makes death to be simply the loss of well-being, and strips of its proper meaning the sentence, "The soul that sinneth it shall die."

2. It does not appreciate the fact that man is more

than "a spiritual being." He holds relation to this created system. He is destined to unfettered dominion over it. For this purpose his body is to be redeemed and the whole creation to be delivered into the liberty of his glory (Rom. viii. 19–21). While, therefore, it is freely conceded that saved men enter upon a future life at once upon their departure out of this world, and that the words of Jesus that such "never die" require this, we must also hold that they do not attain the complete glory of the resurrection state, nor enter upon its full activities, until this emancipation of the creature. The full redemption of man requires his re-investure with a body suited to a redeemed creation. Such a cosmical change seems plainly set forth in Scripture. Its closing pages are gilded with the glory of it.

Both sides of the truth concerning man's future life may be reconciled by bearing in mind what we have learned of his nature as body, soul, and spirit. We have seen that the "soul" is virtually an intermediate embodiment of the spirit, that it survives the death of the carnal body, that the righteous man saves his soul alive through this crisis, and is therefore never completely disembodied or "unclothed," while the soul of the wicked may be destroyed in hell. All that Scripture hints at, therefore, concerning the continued and blessed life of the righteous after death, is conserved by this view of the salvation of his soul. This answers all the requirements of an intermediate etherial body. While all that it suggests concerning a future investiture of the saints with a glorified humanity, crowned on the summit of creation as its head and lord, is provided for by this

view of a completed resurrection when all things shall be made new. And all that it teaches concerning the death of the wicked, their ejection out of the sphere of man's life and heritage, and their inferior and long-delayed recovery through resurrection, is held fast to. While its doctrine of resurrection as eclectic and progressive corresponds with that doctrine of Science which requires that cosmical changes, and transformations in created life, be viewed as proceeding by stages and each in their own order. It can reach no one until he is prepared for it, and it can lift no one above that plane of being for which he is prepared. Scripture, however, shows that a blessed principle has been incorporated into humanity, by which those who reach the highest plane are made capable of reaching down a helping hand to those who are struggling on the arenas below. Saved themselves, they find their highest happiness in becoming saviours of others.

As to the time, then, of the resurrection of the good, we would say that they enter upon the future life at once, and in this sense are raised out of death, their souls surviving this crisis. But they do not take on that form of glorified manhood, which is the heir of all things, until all things are ready for their manifestation as the sons of God. As to the wicked, while their souls in suffering survive the death of the body, yet the light of life in them must vanish away. And resurrection cannot reach them until after their death-sentence has been exhausted. Their release seems to be connected with, and dependent, upon certain future triumphs over the empire of death and hell, and certain changes in the

present natural order, which open the way for gracious intervention in their behalf by that royal priesthood of the future of which Christ is the head. We may not venture to say what anticipations or preparations for these deliverances may now be going on in the unseen world.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

A primary blessing of the gospel is that of the forgiveness of sins. In what does this blessing consist?

It is manifest that it is not indiscriminate pardon. It is not immediate and complete deliverance from deserved penalty. The believer on Christ does not seem to have any exemption above other men from the universal law, "Whatsoever a man soweth that must he also reap." If Christians do wrong, they suffer the inevitable consequence as do other men. There is no loop-hole by which they can escape, in that net-work of evil results in which the law of God ensnares and shuts in the wrong-doer. Moreover, Christians die as do other men. To what other category than the wages of sin do the physical pains and the mortal agony through which they pass belong?

Nor does the Word of God view them as exempt from the consequences of their sins. The words just quoted about sowing and reaping are addressed to them (Gal. vi. 7, 8). It constantly uses toward them the severest language of reproof and threatening. "The Lord shall judge His people" is a key-word in Old Testament Psalm and Prophecy. It is also adopted in the New

Testament. They are warned that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, that vengeance is His, and that He will repay (Heb. x. 30, 31). In nothing does the misconception of Christians about this matter more reveal itself than in their common misquo tation of the passage, "For our God is a consuming fire." It is not "God out of Christ," as we hear them say, but God in Christ, *our* God, who is a consuming fire. The whole book, and the chapter in which this verse occurs (xii. 29), enforces this as its special lesson. Where then comes in the grace of forgiveness?

1. In the first place, Christ's death brings to us all the ransom of our forfeited lives. The gospel proclaims to all men this initial blessing, and so is glad tidings of remission of sins to all men.

2. It proclaims the risen Christ as the power of God to purify from sin the lives which His death has redeemed from destruction. And this He does, not only by separating us from the sins which defile our lives, but from the sinful nature—the old man, in which sin resides. His salvation is a divine operation to set us free from our former sinful selves, and to create within us a new self, "the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." The etymology of the Greek word for forgivneess—ἄφεσις—shows that it is something different from mere pardon. It is the dis charge, the putting away, of the sins that bring punishment. If the sins remain, the penalty must remain. If the nature in which sin resides, and out of which it flows as from a fountain, remains, the death-sentence must abide upon it. God's radical forgiveness carries

with it the complete separation of a man from the sins which make punishment necessary And hence, in Christ, He has instituted that divine operation necessary to effect this result. The deep meaning of the cross is that it is God's condemnation of sin in the flesh. It is His executed sentence upon the old man of sin. Our faith in Christ connects us with Him in His death unto sin. We yield ourselves to that divine operation which requires the killing out in us of the old nature of sin. And just so far as we yield ourselves unto God in this process, to that extent we are saved from the penalty. And just so far as we draw back, and refuse consent with this divine operation to set us free from sin, we become liable to penalty. If we judge not ourselves we are judged of the Lord.

It thus appears that God's offer of forgiveness to the sinner contains no promise of exemption to the flesh, or to the old man. On that ground, and in that character, we must still reap the corruption we sow. It is only as we live in the Spirit that we are not under the law.

At no point do the Christians of our day need more enlightenment than at this point. Many of them look upon the atonement as a device by which, if they keep on sinning, they may still go free at last. A death-bed repentance, in this view, will answer every purpose. Men forget that the purpose of God's salvation is not to rescue them from hell, but to save them from the sins which make hell possible. And they are saved just so far as, and no farther than, they are saved from their sins. God's remission wipes out all the score against their former selves; but, in doing so, it brings the old-

self to the cross of Christ and leaves it there, in the place of death. And if they revive it, and walk after the flesh, they slip back again into the region of law, where God's whip of correction is sure to be laid upon them according to their deeds. Into what fearful evils and consequent sorrows have Christians been tempted by this false view of God's forgiveness, as if it somehow set aside in their case His universal harvest law, which renders to every man according to his deeds, and according to the fruit of his doings. What missteps they might have avoided, what follies they might have shunned, what shame and loss they might have escaped, if they had known that God cannot be trifled with, and that His children, of all men, must be held to the strictest accountability for wrong-doing. And this, as we have seen, is required by the grace that forgives and saves them. For no other salvation would meet the case, or secure their future, but one that judges and casts out their sins,—one that humbles and mortifies the old nature of sin, which must die out in them before they can be raised into the glory and beauty of that eternal life which cannot sin and cannot die.

It also appears that God is no respecter of persons in that He makes different terms for different classes of men, or in that there is any other way of entrance into life than through the complete surrender of the old sinful self to the consuming fire of His holiness. "*Every one* must be salted with fire." If there were a truer understanding of this primary law of God's government and of His salvation, the mystery of the Bible teaching about future punishment would not be so hard

to understand, and the merciful character of this administration, in its bearing upon the future of even the unjust, would be more readily discerned. "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, for thou renderest unto every man according to his work" (Ps. lxii. 12).

JEWISH OPINION.—Among other opinions of Jewish Talmudists, the following is cited:

"The wicked stay in Gehenna till the resurrection, and then the Messiah, passing through it, redeems them." The redemption contemplated is recovery to embodied life. "They are punished till the time decreed is expired and then allowed to transmigrate."

"The righteous bring out of Gehenna imperfect souls." "The future world will have its Gehenna, but the last times will have it no more."

Our view that the hell awaiting sinful men lies this side of resurrection, and that resurrection is essentially redemptive, can be amply verified as the view in vogue among the Jews in the time of Christ. See Alger's *Doctrine of a Future Life*, pp. 169–171. *Mercy and Judgment*, pp. 203, 204.

CONVERSION OF THE WORLD.—The statement has been recently made that the vast heathen populations are growing seventy times faster than the church is gaining upon them by conversions. This would be a gloomy outlook for the world, were we forced to look for its conversion by existing methods. The gospel is now preached to take out of the nations a people prepared for the Lord, who are to be His chosen instruments of salvation to the human race in an age to come.

STUDIES IN THE BIBLE.

IS THIS DOCTRINE PRACTICAL?

We began these discussions with the statement that, in the general drifting away from the old belief in eternal torment, the church was in great need of a good working doctrine of future punishment. By this we mean one that is true to Scripture, that commends itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God, and one that she can fearlessly and honestly proclaim. Such an one, we believe, is that to which these studies have conducted us. It makes a strong and rational appeal to the fears and to the consciences of men. At the same time it easily adjusts itself to all that we have learned of the nature of man, and of the character and purposes of God.

1. This doctrine appeals to the fears of men. It enables us to hold before them, in strict fidelity to the words of Jesus, the great danger to which they are exposed in the loss and utter bankruptcy of that estate in life with which they are now endowed. It makes death to be a deeper and more prolonged destruction than the dissolution of the body, reaching to a possible destruction of the soul in hell. It warns them that this peril is impending and not remote, that the tokens of it are now apparent in the debasement and ruin wrought in this world in the bodies and souls of men. It warns them that this ruin will be complete in death, and that no man can survive this crisis, and save his soul alive, who does not submit to the Lord Jesus Christ as His only Saviour from sin and death. Hell in this view is not a figure of

speech, but a veritable abyss of destruction, into which wicked men must be cast, not only by the sentence of the divine Judge, but by the law of nature and of life. And this doom does not await the issue of a remote trial at a distant judgment day. It is immediate. He, therefore, who would save his life, or save himself and not be cast away—as St. Luke phrases it (ix. 25), must fly for refuge to the hope set before him in the gospel. Here then is just the doctrine of hell our preachers need, who would be faithful to the Master's words.

2. It appeals to the consciences of men, in that it reveals this wages of sin to be the result of wrong-doing, and that it is only reached through a disregard of the warnings of natural law, the monitions of conscience, and by stemming the tide of those gracious and redemptive influences with which God is ever seeking to draw the sinner to himself.

3. It is also a reasonable and scientific view of man's future. It is not rational to suppose that any organized form of life can escape destruction which is not in perfect connection with the source of its life, and which contains within itself the principle of lawlessness. Such a principle is sin (1 John iii. 4). Science teaches that all imperfect forms of life are cast into the furnace of nature's consuming forces which burn with an eternal fire. And science also holds forth a hope of resurrection in showing how even these unworthy and cast-off forms are wrought over again in this alembic of fire.

4. This doctrine appeals to the hopes and highest aspirations of men, in that it shows how they may escape this impending loss of life and of self. It gives the

promise of the conservation of all the true elements of being through the crisis of death, and of a life emancipated, purified, ennobled, and transfigured into the likeness of the glorified manhood of the Lord on the other side of death.

5. It shows how in this way of life there is no respect of persons with God. If any are now called to enter into life it is only in that way of self-sacrifice which surrenders the old man of sin to destruction in His consuming fire. For it is not God *out of* Christ, as the passage is constantly misquoted and misapplied, but God *in* Christ, *Our* God, who is a consuming fire. Every one must be salted with fire (Mark ix. 43–49). It is not *from* judgment for sin, but *through* judgment that he saves. The whole doctrine of atonement and of the forgiveness of sins needs to be re-examined in the light of this great principle. The cross is not God's arrangement by which any sinner may go scot-free from deserved penalty. It is not a device by which a special class can slip through. It is not a bargain by which a certain number of souls have been bought off from eternal torments. It is God's way of condemning sin in the flesh, and of bringing the old man in us to the altar of sacrifice to be consumed by the fire. We are saved, not by escaping the fire of His anger against our sins, but by submitting to it. The Christian accepts the judgment against himself, rendered at the cross, and his death to sin becomes the way of life. The unbeliever refuses to submit himself to the righteousness of God, and must be overwhelmed in the fire that goeth before Him to burn up all His enemies. But the principle of His administration toward both

classes is the same. Towards all that is evil in both He is a consuming fire. And without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

6. While this doctrine proclaims the terrors of the Lord, it enables us at the same time to hold fast to all the testimonies of His grace. It harmonizes the two parallel lines of Scripture teaching concerning judgment and redemption, and shows that God's terrible acts of righteousness are not inconsistent with his essential nature, Love. It shows that what He is in this world He will be in all worlds. His attitude toward sinful man is not changed by death. His judgments are never vindictive. Neither the law, nor the grace, of His administration is ever set aside. A resurrection awaits the sinner out of the pit of destruction into which his sins have cast him, as the result of the ransom paid for all. Redeeming mercy does not forsake him. And yet judgment for his sins must first be satisfied. It must be intensified and prolonged, according to his desert of few or many stripes. These terms "few" and "many," however, imply a limit. The Lord does not say the greater sinner shall be forever beaten with heavier stripes, but with more in number, and the lesser sinner with less. But the stripes, in either case, are not immeasurable. There is an end to both. From the nature of the case, as well as from the teaching of Scripture, we know that all are not freed together. And the law of all life must still prevail to make even resurrected life a burdened and a crippled one, if it be not freed from sin. There is a resurrection of judgment. To every seed his own body. This doctrine, therefore, does not encourage

the sinner to take low or loose views of the requirements of God's law, or of the abatement of its claims. It does not open any other door than the strait and narrow one which leadeth unto life. Resurrection opens no other door. It re-opens to him indeed the door of hope, but then, as well as now, any other way than the right way will end in another death and a lake of fire. Here then is a doctrine of ceaseless punishment for the sinner so long as he remains a sinner, and of eternal death at the end, if he will not humble himself under the mighty hand of God;—but a doctrine also of recovering grace that is not foiled by death, that changes not from age to age, that meets and baffles man's enemies who have dragged him down to death, by new displays of grace and power, and new conquests over death and him that hath the power of it, that is, the devil. Both these sides of truth, and both these aspects of the character and purposes of God are necessary to save us from wrong notions of His ways, and from a distorted conception of Him, in the knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life. What the world is aweary for, and what the Church is languishing for, is a right knowledge of God. No temporary success, or hold on men through their fears, can begin to compensate for the immense damage that must come to them through false or monstrous ideas of God. These underlie everything in religious and moral life. Men become like the God they worship. No greater service, therefore, can be rendered them than one which helps to remove the vail that obscures His face, and shows them that He whom they thought of as a tyrant or a pitiless judge, is the Father, whose pity for

His offspring, and whose gracious purposes, are not circumscribed by this little span of human life, but that He is the same just and loving God, yesterday, to-day, and forever.

Such is the doctrine the Church needs to give her success, because it is the true doctrine and the full gospel. The world can never be frightened by fears to Christ, nor won by a mutilated gospel. Catholic Christianity has not been able to hold more than half the lands once won. Protestant Christianity, still more severe in its dogmas about the future, discarding any relief, such as purgatory gave in the older system, has waned in all the lands of the Reformation. It is scarcely holding its own in this most favored land; for numbers are sometimes a deceptive standard. It makes much of its missionary zeal and conquests. But it is estimated that the addition to the ranks of Pagans and Mahometans by natural increase are fifty times as great as the converts from among them to Christianity. The Church has been seeking to evangelize these millions with a gospel that largely conceals the grace of God, that draws a dark veil over His face, and denies that it is glad tidings of great joy to all people. Her success either at home or abroad furnishes no argument against the trial of some new and more merciful view. The world has not been won, and cannot be, in any way that conceals from men the true knowledge of God. The Holy Spirit will not honor testimony that robs the mission of the Lord Christ of half its grace and glory. Nor can an appeal to men's fears avail which so exaggerates its terrors

that the very men who utter it recoil from it, while their hearers are only dazed and stunned into stolidity or unbelief. We want a rational doctrine of hell, as well as a full gospel proclamation of Him who holds its keys, and whose resurrection shed down its light of hope among the "spirits in prison," the myriads of earth's dead who have been carried away captive into its dark domain. And we need to arouse men, not only by the hope of individual salvation,—a hope not free from selfishnesss—but by the high aim of fellowship with Christ in present sacrifice, that so, baptized for the dead, they may be fitted to take part with Him in those ever-widening conquests by which He shall recover from the land of the enemy the captive multitudes of our race for whom His soul travailed unto death. The anxious cry of the heathen, "What of our ancestors?" when they first hear the gospel, would find here its satisfying answer.

NOTES ON CURRENT OPINIONS AND EVENTS.

Life and Death.—The Rev. Geo. O. Barnes, "Mountain Evangelist," has sent us a brief essay of his with the above title, with permission to publish. He has our thanks for both the tract and the privilege. Did our limits allow we would be glad to publish it, with our comments. It contributes some valuable thoughts to the grave problems we have been discussing. He strongly rejects the orthodox solution of the mystery of future punishment, an eternal hell of damned souls, which he describes as a "running sore upon the heavenly body politic, a Botany Bay of irreclaimable convicts—blaspheming the King's name, and polluting His dominions with their presence." He admits the truth of annihilation, in so far as

that all that is evil which has entered into the being and character of sinful men, and all beings essentially evil, as is Satan, will be destroyed. His general principle is that all that is of life, which includes the image of God in man, "is its own protection." It cannot be destroyed and must, when the incrusted evil has been burnt away, "go up to God," while "all that is of sin—death claims and devours." The general drift, therefore, of the author's view is towards restitution.

We recognize some of the author's views as in the same line with those given in the chapter, *Destruction Qua Homo*, in our book upon the *Mystery of Creation and of Man*. He does not have a clear view, however, of the relation of the doctrine of resurrection to this whole subject. If he had, he would see that Scripture knows nothing of "released souls" flying up to God, except they have first won the crown of life on the arena of embodied manhood; and that no restitution is provided for sinful men except a recovery to this sphere of manhood, out of which sin has cast them, which must bring to them a new opportunity to win this prize. Failing in this, the second death seems in Scripture to close the scene of their trial. All beyond this is speculation.

The Presbyterian Creed.—*The Independent* quotes Dr. S. S. Mitchell, of Buffalo, as saying in a recent sermon: "The Presbyterian Church, possibly the broadest of all the evangelical churches, has always recognized the fallibility of all human creeds, and her clergymen are never sworn to the confession, word by word, and letter by letter. All that is required of them is that they shall accept it as a system of doctrine. And the private members of the church are not asked to do even this. . . . For one or two whole generations the church has been all the while raising her ceiling, so as to give plenty of breathing room for the mightiest pair of lungs."

This sounds very well, but it is not strictly true. That church still expects and officially requires her ministers to adhere closely to the Westminster Confession. And although there is much practical toleration of a style of preaching which either ignores or is inconsistent with many of its statements upon vital points, such preaching has no official sanction. A man is allowed not only to

differ from the creed, but to covertly assail it, provided he does not openly avow his sentiments, nor do anything to disturb the security of the system, or the tranquility of the church. But let him candidly avow his differences; let him proclaim it as the sacred duty of the church to subject her authorized statements of doctrine from time to time to revision in the light of her advancing knowledge of the truth, let him move in this direction in the church courts, and he will find that the effort to raise the ceiling in this truly honest and responsible way will be apt to bring it down upon his own head. It is this very kind of covert and irresponsible liberty that we have protested against in this magazine. We do not believe in any such efforts to give the church a reputation for liberality which she does not deserve. We wish all our ministers who assert for themselves liberty of prophesying, as does Dr. Mitchell, would join us in this effort to induce the church to re-cast formulas which are now virtually disowned, and so help to bring the church on to honest ground.

The Andover Trial.—It is to be regretted that the issue in this trial does not turn directly upon the Scriptural warrant for the new teaching, but rather upon whether it is consistent with the creed which the Professors are required to sign every five years. Upon this question honest men will incline to one opinion. It is not a question of precedents, but of the law of contract. It is indeed a great misfortune that benefactors should have so tied up their gifts, and hampered the liberty of prophesying in men who cannot properly fulfill their office, unless they yield themselves to the light which God gives them. The Professors at Princeton Seminary are unfortunately still more hampered. It is worse than folly, it is a dishonor to the Spirit given to unfold the truth to the Church until she comes to the perfect knowledge of the Son of God, to assume, as such donors have done, and as the Church has done in the rigid enforcement of her creeds, that the function of the Church is merely to conserve the statements of faith to which she has once for all attained. The law of her life is that she must *grow* in divine knowledge. The Holy Spirit has been given her for this purpose. The best way, therefore, for the Andover men is, once for all, to repudiate such a system and to begin anew. If the foundations are false, let them, at any sacrifice, be relaid.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The following is from a Presbyterian brother, a member of the last Synod of Pennsylvania:

DEAR BRO. BAKER: I have read every number of your magazine with deep interest. While reading the December number I could but wish that "Words of Reconciliation" might be read by every minister, not only of our church, but of all evangelical denominations.

Now it occurs to me to make a suggestion—that for the benefit of those who have not the book at hand, or who would not take the trouble to refer to it, you print again the language of the Confession on endless punishment, together with the proof texts. Then, if any brother in the ministry is ready to say that in his judgment these "words which the Holy Spirit teaches" completely fill the measure of the language of the Standards, let him be invited to do so. Certainly no other has the right to 'swing the ecclesiastical whip' over the shoulders of his brethren, who fully acknowledge the authority of God's word, but believe they may, without sin, question the authority of uninspired men. Nay, "the holy Scriptures are the *only* rule of faith and obedience," as declared in the Standards.

Numerous defenses of the dogma of endless torment have come to my notice, and have been read with attention. These writings might be variously described as sincere, earnest, vigorous, vehement, while some, alas! seemed to be marked by a recklessness that halted not at much unfairness and misrepresentation of opposing views. None of these defenses that I have seen consist of bare quotations from the infallible word, without the attempt to force into them the meaning the writers desire to establish. Such quotations as have been made from the sacred Scriptures seem to me to be fitly described as 'text slinging,' and that at long range.

I like your remarks on the action of the Synod of Pennsylvania. The paper adopted declares "the current speculations about a probation after death non-Scriptural and non Christian." Good! But whoever begins that way ought not to stop where the Synod did. The road stretches a long way beyond that. The Synod "commends a profounder study of the Word of God, and a more earnest preaching of its plain truths." Excellent! Such study will lead to

what may be to some a surprising discovery—that the current phrases "eternal death," "endless or everlasting torment," etc., are "non-Scriptural;" therefore, should not be employed by preachers, unless they find their exact equivalents in the holy word.

Could you not bring this matter to a focus by a call for subscribers to a statement like this; drawn from the explicit statements of the Westminster Confession.

"According to the teachings of God's Word, the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be punished with unspeakable torments both of body and soul, without intermission, with the devil and his angels in hell-fire forever. That is, conversely, should the wicked, at any future period be released, or cease to exist in such condition of torment, God would be proven a liar."

Who will sign that? Yet there are some advocates of the dogma of endless torment, who, if really as positive as their utterances would indicate, should not stagger at it. It may be fairly submitted, that no one who is not willing to subscribe this converse statement has any right to oppose the call for a revision of the Standards.

Faithfully yours.

In response to the above suggestion we subjoin the proof texts from the Standards, with a few comments, and submit whether our correspondent's point is not well made, that they do not begin to contain the whole of the doctrine to prove which they are quoted. It must be borne in mind that these statements define specifically the doom of the wicked *after their resurrection.*

The proof texts are (see pages 190, 239). Mark ix, 43, 44: "To go into hell, where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched."

These words were spoken to *disciples*, in order to urge them to escape a total loss of their embodied being in the future, by submitting its members of sin to present self-judgment. They do not affect the question as to what resurrection may hereafter do for a being who has been thus destroyed.

2. Luke xvi. 26: "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

By the terms of this parable, the punishment of Dives is inflicted just after his death. It begs the question to assume that resurrection makes no change in his condition. And the quotation

of the passage to prove what fate awaits the wicked after they are raised up is wholly unwarranted.

3. Matt. xxv. 31, 46. "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment."

We recently heard Dr. Pierson, at whose instigation the Synod of Pennsylvania took the action our correspondent refers to, state at a Bible Reading that this passage describes a judgment of the living nations at Christ's Second Coming. His principle of interpretation is correct, although we differ with him, in our belief that the judgment described began with our Lord's ascension, and reaches its consummation in a future open revelation of His glory. But, in either case, the nations sorted into sheep or goats are not the *resurrected* dead, and therefore the passage cannot be quoted as decisive of what awaits them beyond resurrection.

The same thing is true of 2 Thess. i. 8, 9 and Rev. xiv. 11. The resurrected dead are not brought to view. Only Rev. xx. 15 looks beyond the resurrection. And here eternal death, and not eternal torment, closes the scene.

"DEAR BROTHER: I was interested in noticing how Dr. Green in his notes on one of the recent Sunday-school lessons disposed of the difficulty in Jer. 35; 19—"Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab the Son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me FOREVER." By a number of quotations he shows that the common sense interpretation which avoids an unnecessary literalism and leaves room for a time limit to the expression "forever" is altogether the best defence of the prophecy. Thus we are delivered from the dreary business of skirmishing around to find a surviving body of descendants of the Rechabites, and the resulting anxiety as to their further perpetuation; and yet the fulfillment of the prophecy none can impeach.

Why not then rein in our daring literalism as to the "forever" of eternal punishment, and deliver the Christian faith from an unspeakably greater and more harassing bondage. After the profoundest study of words and texts, does not a divinely enlightened common sense rebuke us for this childish continuance of the thought of time succession in that condition which we name "eternity"—the fundamental conception of which is the reversal, or rather ob-

literation of time and space? Thus we retain the warning and restraint which the Bible reveals as attaching to the penalties of the future world, but are enabled at the same time to face even that world of penalty in the Scriptural attitude of hope."

The above is an extract from the letter of a highly esteemed and successful Presbyterian pastor. There is great force in the argument he derives from the fundamental conception of eternity, "as the reversal or rather obliteration of time and space." And yet we must confess to something of the difficulty which Dean Plumptre expresses in his criticism of the views of Maurice and Westcott upon this point, "I find it impossible," he says, "to conceive of life, either human or divine, apart from the idea of duration." We prefer, therefore, to find relief from the "harassing bondage" so long imposed upon the church by the literalism of this word, in the limitations imposed upon it in Scripture. Nothing is more certain than that the Old Testament speaks of a "forever" punishment which was not to be endless. A fire of God's anger was kindled against Judah which was to burn forever, (Jer xvii. 4). The smoke of Idumea's unquenchable burning should go up night and day forever (Is. xxxiv. 10). In these cases the strongest equivalent the word will bear is age-long. All such threatenings are limited by the declared purpose to bring to an end these times of destruction, and to bring on the "times of restitution." So the "eternal punishment" of the New Testament must be regarded as limited by God's declared purpose of resurrection. Resurrection, in the prophetic conception, always bounds the age and introduces the age to come. The conception of an endless punishment, in which resurrection is only a brief interval and an aggravated torment, is foreign to the whole Biblical idea. We have gone through the Bible in our studies with this key in hand, and are satisfied that this is its own relief to this dark subject. Eternal punishment is punishment that endures through the whole order of things. It comes to its end only as the subject of it may pass out into another order through resurrection. If it is objected that this same word defines the life of the saved, our reply is that the *death* idea always enters into the Scripture idea of future punishment. And death is something which resurrection necessarily terminates, while life, so interrupted, would only be re-enforced and perpetuated. But whether we can fix the truth in its proper relations or not, there it stands, written all along the Scriptures, if one has eyes to see it.